

Message Text

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ACTION HEW-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-10 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00
NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 INR-10
IO-13 MED-02 PA-01 HA-05 CA-01 OES-07 AID-05
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FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 0012
CINCPAC NIACT IMMEDIATE
CMEF NIACT IMMEDIATE
CINCPACFLT NIACT IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI IMMEDIATE
CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL, ATLANTA, GA IMMEDIATE
HQ PACAF IMMEDIATE
NAVCOMSTA DIEGO GARCIA IMMEDIATE
USS FOX IMMEDIATE
CLARK AFB IMMEDIATE
NAVAL HOSPITAL, SUBIC BAY IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L COLOMBO 1589

CINCPAC FOR POLAD
STATE FOR OFDA
CLARK AFB FOR U.S. AIR FORCE HOSPITAL

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SWEL, MV

SUBJ: CHOLERA EPIDEMIC IN REPUBLIC OF MALDIVES; POSSIBLE
REQUEST FOR USG ASSISTANCE

REF: 2 FAM 060; AID HB 8

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1. SUMMARY: UNITED NATION'S CHILDREN'S FUND (UNICEF) IS ONE
OF UNITED NATIONS AGENCIES WITH EXTENSIVE PROGRAM IN REPUBLIC
OF MALDIVES, DIRECTED BY COLOMBO RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE PAUL
IGNATIEFF (CANADIAN). ANOTHER UN AGENCY, WORLD HEALTH OR-
GANIZATION (WHO), ALSO HAS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM IN MALDIVES
UNDER DIRECTION REGIONAL WHO OFFICE IN NEW DELHI. IGNATIEFF
6 APRIL INFORMED US THAT HE HAD BEEN DESIGNATED BY WHO AND

UNICEF AS LIAISON OFFICER TO ASSIST GOVERNMENT OF MALDIVES (GOM) IN COMBATTING CHOLERA EPIDEMIC. IGNATIEFF PROVIDED EMBASSY WITH THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION AND MADE TWO REQUESTS. HE CAUTIONED THAT THIS MATTER HAD NOT YET APPEARED IN THE PRESS AND THAT GOM WISHES TO MAKE FIRST ANNOUNCEMENT WHEN MAJOR MEDICAL COUNTER-MEASURES BEGIN. END SUMMARY.

2. BACKGROUND TO MALDIVES EPIDEMIC

CHOLERA STRAIN STILL NOT IDENTIFIED. WHO DOCTORS AND EPIDEMIOLOGIST NOW IN MALDIVES HOPE TO COME UP WITH DEFINITIVE FINDINGS WITHIN TWO DAYS. FIRST KNOWN OUTBREAK 6 JANUARY IN THAA ATOLL AND HAS SINCE SPREAD TO FORTY-SIX OF 200 INHABITED ISLANDS IN THE MALDIVES, INCLUDING LAAMU, DHAALU, MEEMU, BAA, MALE, LAVIYANI, RAA.

3. PRESENT SITUATION

OF TOTAL MALDIVE POPULATION OF 140,000, UN MEDICAL PERSONNEL ESTIMATE THAT 71,000 HAVE BEEN EXPOSED TO CHOLERA. 2,900 CASES NOW UNDER TREATMENT WITH 108 DEATHS REPORTED TO DATE. UNICEF RESREP IGNATIEFF HAS PROVIDED US WITH LIST OF MEDICINES ALREADY DELIVERED TO MALDIVES WITH OBSERVATION THAT LOCALLY AVAILABLE SUPPLIES NEARLY EXHAUSTED AND MEDICAL PERSONNEL IN MALDIVES INSUFFICIENT MEET NEEDS. IGNATIEFF THEN ASKED FOR FOLLOWING INFORMATION.

4. ACTIONS REQUESTED

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A. PLEASE ADVISE BY IMMEDIATE RETURN TELEGRAM HOW SOON AIR DELIVERY TO MALE, REPUBLIC OF MALDIVES CAN TAKE PLACE OF 20,000 CONTAINERS, 500 ML EJAH, RINGERS LACTATED SOLUTION WITH INFUSION GIVERS SET. CONTAINERS PREFERABLY PLASTIC NOT GLASS. UNICEF WOULD PREFER THESE ITEMS AND TRANSPORTATION AS GIFT, BUT SITUATION IN MALDIVES SO ACUTE UNICEF WILL FUND IF THAT IS PROBLEM FOR USG. MALE AIRPORT (HULULE) CAN RECEIVE BOEING 737.

B. LACK OF TRAINED MEDICAL AND PARA-MEDICAL PERSONNEL IN MALDIVES TO INTRAVENOUSLY ADMINISTER ABOVE ALONG WITH OTHER MEDICAL REQUIREMENTS, AND SCARCITY INTERNAL TRANSPORTATION BETWEEN ISLANDS IS EQUALLY PRESSING CONCERN. HOW SOON COULD US NAVAL OR AIR UNITS WITH MEDICAL AND PARA-MEDICAL PERSONNEL REACH MALDIVES? ARE ANY EQUIPPED WITH HELICOPTERS WHICH COULD BE UTILIZED FOR INTER-ISLAND TRANSPORTATION OF MEDICAL PERSONNEL? COULD MEDICAL PERSONNEL BE AIRLIFTED FROM DIEGO GARCIA TO GAN OR MALE (HULULE AIRPORT)? PLEASE ADVISE BY IMMEDIATE RETURN CABLE.

5. OTHER DONORS INVOLVED

IGNATIEFF SAID HE WAS CONTACTING FRENCH, BRITISH AND INDIAN GOVERNMENTS, AS WELL AS USG, TO FIND OUT ATTITUDES AND AVAIL-

ABILITIES. UPON RECEIPT RESPONSES HE WOULD MAKE IMMEDIATE FORMAL REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE. IN ADDITION TO KEEPING UN HEADQUARTERS IN NEW YORK INFORMED, HE ADVISING WHO NEW DELHI REGIONAL OFFICE AND UNICEF COPENHAGEN PROCUREMENT FACILITIES OF HIS DISCUSSIONS. IGNATIEFF REPEATED HIS REQUEST FOR DISCRETION IN HANDLING OF TPGS INFORMATION IN ORDER ALLOW GOM MAKE FIRST PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT.

6. EMBASSY NOTES THAT DAO COMMANDER PAUL O. CUTCHEN WILL BE IN MALE ON PREVIOUSLY SCHEDULED TRAVEL UNTIL 12 APRIL AND COULD PROVIDE SHORE LIAISON FOR US NAVAL OR AIR ASSISTANCE. U.S. CONSULAR AGENKS MALE WILL OPEN UPON RECEIPT STATE DEPT. APPROVAL ENGAGE CONSULAR AGENT ACCEPTABLE TO GOM.

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7. AMBASSADOR HAS DETERMINED THAT A DISASTER OBTAINS IN THE REPUBLIC OF MALDIVES AND IS PREPARED TO COMMIT \$25,000 PER AUTHORITY SET FORTH REFS.

8. IN LIGHT OF CURRENT HEAVY DEMANDS ON EMBASSY COLOMBO AID STAFF, AMBASSADOR HAS DESIGNATED AS MISSION DISASTER RELIEF OFFICER, FSO LEROY DEBOLD; OFFICE TELEPHONE NUMBER 26211, EXT. 203; RESIDENCE TELEPHONE NUMBER 95531.
WRIGGINS

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